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RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
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DEPT FOR SE GRATION, S/USSES, AF A/S CARSON, AF/C, AF/PDPA
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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: SUDANESE MEDIA RESPONDS TO SPECIAL ENVOY
GRATION'S JUNE 17 PRESS BRIEFING

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: Khartoum's state-influenced media "selectively" portrayed U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan General Gration's June 17 remarks in Washington to U.S. and international press as strongly supportive of the policies of the ruling National Congress Party. Pro-government media spun the Special Envoy's answer to the question of whether "genocide is ongoing in Darfur" as "putting the issue to rest." END SUMMARY

¶2. (U) On June 18, "Al-Ahdath," a relatively independent Arabic-language newspaper, ran a headline entitled "Gration Refuses to Call Situation in Darfur Genocide." Likewise, the pro-government daily "Al-Wifaq" had a front-page spread proclaiming "Gration Affirms the Government of Sudan's Position That There Will Be No Return of Expelled Organizations and There Is No Genocide in Darfur." In the June 19 issue of "Al-Rai al-Aam," the newspaper dismissed the situation in Darfur with "What's Happening in Darfur Is Nothing But a Conflict Between the Government and Rebels, and Mobsters Are Trying to Terrorize Local Residents."

¶3. (U) In editorials, most of the pro-government papers continued to push their interpretations of Gration's statements. On June 20, "Sudan Vision," a pro-government English-language paper, wrote that "Mr. Gration's style discards some of the discordant rhetoric used by officials of both the Bush and Obama administrations," and that the Special Envoy is now "openly embracing the long-established tactical partnership between the U.S. and Sudan, which is grounded in counter-terrorism cooperation." Sudan Vision also printed the Special Envoy's remarks verbatim.

¶4. (U) On June 21, SudanTribune.com, an independent, Paris-based online publication that is often very critical of the Government of Sudan, quoted Hussein Abu Sharati, a spokesperson for the internally displaced peoples of Darfur, as saying "what happened and still is happening in Darfur is genocide, and it is regrettable to see the envoy of President Obama speculating over such a sensitive issue... we are deeply hurt and extremely disappointed."

¶5. (U) On June 22, the government-run Sudan News Agency (SUNA) said the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs was "hopeful that the perspective espoused by the U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan... is shared by the entire U.S. administration," falsely stating that General Gration had "denied the existence of genocide in Darfur." SUNA also reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs "believes such a position will silence hostile attitudes against Sudan."

ASQUINO